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# Cuba: Religion and Revolutionary Institutionalization

by MARGARET E. CRAHAN

## *Introduction*<sup>1</sup>

Both before and after the 1959 revolution, the Catholic Church in Cuba deviated from the norm in Latin America. This is in large measure due to the unique historical and social experience of Cuba, as well as to the fact that the church remained until the early 1960s largely a missionary outpost of Spain. When the revolution occurred, the Catholic Church was frozen in a pre-Vatican II mold which was reinforced by an exodus of clergy, religious and laity. The economic and diplomatic embargo of Cuba further isolated the church from progressive trends within the international church. Thus, the ferment unleashed by Vatican II (1962-5) and the Latin American Bishops Conference at Medellín, Colombia (1968) had less impact than changes resulting from the Cuban Revolution. As a consequence, the Catholic Church in Cuba entered the 1970s with limited theological and pastoral resources to meet the challenge of a consolidated Marxist/Leninist revolution. As an institution, the Catholic Church in Cuba is, as it was in 1959, the weakest in all of Latin America.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Funds for research on this topic were partially provided by the Social Science Research Council, the Antilles Program of Yale University and the City University of New York Research Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> For the strength of the church in the pre-1959 period, see Luis Aguilar, *Cuba, 1933: Prologue to Revolution* (New York, W. W. Norton, 1974), pp. 21-2; J. Merle Davis, *The Cuban Church in a Sugar Economy* (New York, International Missionary Council, 1942), p. 49; Leslie Dewart, *Christianity and Revolution: The Lesson of Cuba* (New York, Herder & Herder, 1963), pp. 93-9; Francois Houtart and Andre Rousseau, *The Church and Revolution* (Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis, 1971), pp. 113-14; J. Lloyd Mecham, *Church and State in Latin America* (rev. ed.) (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1966), pp. 423-4; Lowry Nelson, *Rural Cuba* (New York, Octagon, 1970), p. 268; Ramón E. Ruiz, *Cuba: The Making of a Revolution* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1968), p. 162. For the post-1959 period, see Margaret E. Crahan, 'Salvation Through Christ or Marx: Religion in Revolutionary Cuba', in Daniel H. Levine, (ed.), *Churches and Politics in Latin America* (Beverly Hills, Sage Publications, 1980), pp. 238-66.

The weakness of the Catholic Church is, in large measure, related to the extended colonial past of Cuba, together with continued heavy Spanish involvement. During Cuba's long struggle for independence (1843-98), the Catholic Church as an institution tended to support continued Spanish control. Such support was particularly pronounced in the 1890s and, hence, there was considerable anti-Catholic feeling in the early independence period. This facilitated the growth of Protestantism, as Baptist, Episcopalian, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Quaker missionaries began flooding Cuba and erecting schools and churches throughout the island.

Protestant penetration was facilitated by US political and economic influence, as well as by the reputation of the Protestant ministers as being more progressive and democratic than the Catholic clergy.<sup>3</sup> The neo-colonial relationship between the United States and Cuba initially benefited the Protestant churches. By 1959, however, the identification of the Protestant churches with the US served as a disadvantage, particularly in the face of a strongly nationalistic revolution.

Cuban nationalism affected the fortunes not only of the Protestants, but also the Catholics. As Cuba began to acquire more national consciousness in the early twentieth century, particularly in the face of increasing economic and political dominance by the US, both the Catholic and Protestant churches were challenged to become more Cuban by focusing on the island's special needs. In the 1920s and 1930s, institutional religion began to concern itself more with local socioeconomic problems. This tendency was reinforced by the appearance of secular competitors, particularly Marxist labor unions and socialist political parties.

By the 1920s, the Catholic Church began trying to animate the laity by organizing the *Federación de la Juventud Cubana* (1927), *Caballeros Católicos* (1929), *Agrupación Católica Universitaria* (1931), and *Acción Católica* (1932). These groups aimed at increasing the involvement, particularly of middle class Cubans, in church activities based on the reformist social doctrines of the encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. This impulse helped break down the isolation of the Catholic Church and stimulated a religious revival among the Cuban middle class in the late 1930s and 1940s. Progress of this nature did not eliminate, however, the image of the church as foreign, as Spaniards constituted approximately 80% of all priests and religious.<sup>4</sup> Nor did Catholic strategy diminish the urban

<sup>3</sup> Margaret E. Crahan, 'Religious Penetration and Nationalism in Cuba: U.S. Methodist Activities, 1898-1958', *Revista/Review Interamericana*, Vol. VIII, No. 2 (Summer 1978), pp. 204-24.

<sup>4</sup> Dewart, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-5.

concentration of the church. Throughout the twentieth century, approximately 85% of church personnel and activities were based in Havana.<sup>5</sup> The vast majority of these were engaged in teaching at elite private schools. The upshot was that the church's pastoral work was limited.

The consequences were sharply revealed in a 1957 survey by *Agrupación Católica* of 400 rural workers scattered throughout Cuba. Only 52.10% identified themselves as Catholics and 41.41% claimed to have no religion whatsoever. Protestants amounted to 3.26% and spiritists 1.09%, although many more occasionally practiced *santería* (Afro-Cuban spiritism). The absence of priests in rural Cuba was attested to by the fact that 53.51% of those surveyed had never seen a priest and only 7.81% had any personal contact with one. Of those who identified themselves as Catholics, 88.84% never attended Mass and only 4.25% attended three or more times a year.<sup>6</sup> Church activities in the 1930s and 1940s which increased involvement in the Catholic Church by the urban middle class did not greatly affect the rural population which constituted nearly half the population. A similar situation existed with respect to the mainline Protestant denominations which had much stronger urban than rural bases and also concentrated on elite education.<sup>7</sup>

Christianity was, nevertheless, a pervasive cultural presence in Cuba with Catholicism being an integral part of national identity. This was in spite of the fact that in 1960 only 72.5% of Cubans questioned in a nationwide survey identified themselves as Catholics. Close to 20% claimed to have no religion at all.<sup>8</sup> Thus, while Cuba was nominally a Catholic country, its identification was weak as compared to other Latin American countries. In the countryside, the identification was considerably less, which meant that the church had few possibilities to combat the inroads of Marxism there. The church, in addition, did not serve as a long-term institutional base for opposition to the revolution, as so much of the urban middle class migrated to Spain and the US in the early 1960s.

A 1969 survey of Catholic parishes in Havana, predicted that by 1972 50–70% of their members would have left Cuba.<sup>9</sup> The size of the loss

<sup>5</sup> Houtart and Rousseau, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

<sup>6</sup> Oscar A. Echevarría Salvat, *La agricultura cubana, 1934–1966: Régimen social, productividad y nivel de vida de sector agrícola* (Miami, Ediciones Universal, 1971), pp. 14–16; 25.

<sup>7</sup> Margaret E. Crahan, 'Protestantism in Cuba', in Roger L. Cunliffe, (ed.), *PCCLAS Proceedings*, Vol. IX (San Diego, The Campanile Press, 1982), pp. 61–2.

<sup>8</sup> René F. de la Huerta Aguiar, 'Espiriritismo y otras supersticiones en la población cubana', *Revista del Hospital Psiquiátrico de la Habana*, Vol. II, No. 1 (enero, febrero, marzo, 1960), pp. 45–7.

<sup>9</sup> Mateo Jover, 'The Cuban Church in a Revolutionary Society', *LADOC*, Vol. IV, No. 32 (April, 1974), p. 27.

of clergy and religious is similar. In 1960 there were 723 priests in Cuba, in 1965 220 remained, and in 1980 only 213. Nuns were reduced from 2,225 in 1960, to 191 in 1965 and 220 in 1980.<sup>10</sup> Hence, while Catholicism had deep historical roots in Cuba and influenced national identity, culture and values, the Catholic Church had serious institutional weaknesses which hindered its capacity to reduce the inroads of Protestantism and secularism in the prerevolutionary period and Marxism in the postrevolutionary period.

## I

### *The Cuban Reality*

#### *A. Prerevolutionary conditions*

In the 1950s, the most acute socioeconomic problem in Cuba was the condition of the rural population. Agricultural workers in 1957 had an average annual income of approximately US \$220. While rural workers raised and consumed some of their own foodstuffs, 69.30 % of their income was spent on food. This level of expenditure left little for other basic needs, particularly clothing, medical care and education.<sup>11</sup> Unemployment and underemployment were common seven to nine months of the year, prompting migration to urban areas where there was the appearance of greater prosperity and opportunity.

Living conditions for the rural worker were difficult. In the late 1950s, 42.34 % lived in substandard housing. Most rural houses had only one (41.64 %) or two rooms (43.76 %) and 62.39 % had dirt floors. Running water existed in only 3.26 % of rural dwellings compared with 54.6 % in the urban areas. Most rural families got their water from wells (88.60 %). Nearly two-thirds (63.97 %) had no indoor sanitation and only 7.27 % had electricity. Disease under these conditions was common with 36.10 % of those surveyed having suffered from parasites, 13.25 % from typhus, 30.93 % from malaria, and 13.99 % from tuberculosis. Education was a rare commodity. Illiteracy was 43.09 % with 44.11 % never having attended school. Of those that did only 1.18 % finished the seventh grade.<sup>12</sup>

While Catholic organizations such as *Agrupación Católica* and *Acción Católica* were increasingly aware of rural problems, the traditional focus of church activities on the urban middle classes and education continued. This led activist Catholics, particularly youths to seek other outlets for their

<sup>10</sup> *Anuario Pontificio, 1982.*

<sup>11</sup> Echevarría, *op. cit.*, pp. 69; 73-4.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19; 34-50.

concern, including the 26th of July movement. Most Catholics did not, however, become actively engaged in the 1950s struggle between Fulgencio Batista and Fidel Castro. Nor did the church hierarchy speak out against Batista's 1952 coup.<sup>13</sup> In fact, Cardinal Arteaga congratulated Batista on his taking power, as did some leading laypersons. These actions contributed to the identification of the Catholic Church with the dictatorship.

The hierarchy was in fact divided, as well as fearful of causing difficulties with the government. Hence, the church claimed to be apolitical. According to an official of the Cuban Bishops Conference, this stance flowed, in large measure, from the bishops approval of the existing Cuban system, if not its leadership.<sup>14</sup> In early December 1958, the Cuban hierarchy rejected a request from the clergy (with the approval of the papal nuncio) that a pastoral letter be issued concerning the insurrection.<sup>15</sup> There were, however, a few laypersons who criticized the arbitrary and repressive use of state power.<sup>16</sup>

The diocesan clergy, which was predominantly Cuban, in contrast to the regular clergy, were more anti-Batista. Some members of *Juventud Católica* and *Acción Católica* supported the Castro forces by engaging in urban sabotage, relaying messages, publicizing the cause and providing safe houses. In late 1958, a handful of *Agrupación Católica* militants, including Manuel Artimé who subsequently led the Bay of Pigs invasion, joined Fidel in the Sierra.<sup>17</sup> The Catholic Church's position was both ambiguous and passive.

This resulted in part, from the fact that the church hierarchy believed it should strive for non-partisanship, a posture which was reinforced by a desire not to arouse Batista's wrath. They did not believe Christian responsibility involved participating in political struggle, irrespective of the issues. There was no theological base for a broader interpretation and little identification with the poor. Those liberal tendencies that had developed were circumscribed and did not have a leavening effect on the

<sup>13</sup> Houtart and Rousseau, *op. cit.*, p. 115 and Hugh Thomas, *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom* (New York, Harper & Row, 1971), p. 793.

<sup>14</sup> Interview IH 4731191. In 1973, 1974, 1975, and 1976 I conducted some 50 interviews of Cuban churchpeople on the island, in Spain and in the United States. These interviews were updated in 1979 and 1984. Given the fact that some interviewees in Spain requested anonymity, all are referred to by letter and number only.

<sup>15</sup> Dewart, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

<sup>16</sup> Houtart, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

<sup>17</sup> Dewart, *op. cit.*, pp. 3, 108; Alfred L. Padula, Jr., 'The Fall of the Bourgeoisie: Cuba, 1959-1961' (Doctoral Dissertation, University of New Mexico, 1974), pp. 438-9; Interview IH 471119.

whole church. Even the growth of such organizations as *Acción Católica* and *Jóvenes Obreros Católicos* (JOC) in the 1950s did not result in considerable change. Their focus was primarily institution building and these groups did not encourage substantial integration into the 1950s struggle, nor subsequently into the revolution. Rather, they reinforced belief in gradualistic reform.<sup>18</sup> By 1959 the Catholic Church in Cuba had not penetrated a good portion of the Cuban populace. Only a minority of churchpeople were socially and politically active and their agenda diverged from that which the revolution was to offer.

The Catholic hierarchy's strategy for dealing with the insurrection was essentially to ignore it and continue to cultivate the existing leadership. The bishops had not yet begun to focus sharply on Cuban socioeconomic problems and those few priests or laypersons who did, talked in general terms about the need to improve rural conditions, reduce economic dependency on the US and eliminate the abuses of the military. This reformism was not very apparent to most Cubans and the image of the church continued to be as a support of the status quo, even if the reality was more ambiguous.<sup>19</sup>

#### *B. Initial impact of the revolution, 1959–1962.*

Ambiguity marked the initial reaction of churchpeople to the triumph of the 26th of July movement. The church had expected the overthrow of Batista to stabilize Cuban society rather than precipitate radical change. As the revolutionary program began to be implemented, opposition grew within the church. Hence, early approval gave way to expressions of concern and, by 1960, alarm. In addition, the church leadership's hope of overturning the divorce law and reinstating religious instruction in public schools came to naught.<sup>20</sup>

As early as February, 1959, Archbishop Pérez Serantes, who had intervened for Castro at the time of the Moncada attack, cautioned the revolutionary government against 'utopian egalitarianism', a catchword for Marxism. After the initiation of the Cold War and before Vatican II encouraged Marxist–Christian dialogue, the Cuban Catholic Church was very fearful of Communism. As one commentator described it:

<sup>18</sup> Padula, *op. cit.*, pp. 430–1; Interview IH 4731192.

<sup>19</sup> That the church was not considered to be part of the solution to such problems as rural poverty is indicated by the 1957 *Agrupación Católica* survey of 400 rural workers. Only 3.43% indicated that they believed that the church could contribute to improving rural conditions, while 68.73% felt that the government could. Such an expectation provided fertile ground for the revolution. Echevarría, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>20</sup> Padula, *op. cit.*, p. 440.

The tragedy of the Cuban Church was that its renaissance came a decade too late, the revolution a decade too soon. Had the renaissance come earlier and more vigorously – the revolution might have had to contend with a more socially conscious, active and popular church, a church more capable of defining – and defending – its interest. Had the revolution come later, it might have found a church whose violent antagonism towards socialism had mellowed under the influence of Pope John XXIII and the Marxist–Christian dialogue of the 1960s. Instead, the Church, fragmented, unsure, too closely linked with foreigners and the rich, challenged a popular government and was resoundingly and humiliatingly defeated. The bishops had sounded the call to battle. The faithful did not respond.<sup>21</sup>

The first major break came over the draft agrarian reform law which began to circulate in March 1959. While Bishop Evelio Díaz, in the name of all of the hierarchy expressed approval, some leaders of *Grupación Católica* publicly opposed it. In June the Jesuits organized a meeting of sixty-two priests at Fidel Castro's *alma mater* Belén to discuss agrarian reform and review the political situation in general. One of the hosts, Manuel Foyacá, warned against Communist elements within the agrarian reform program while the Franciscan, Father Biaín disputed this.<sup>22</sup> The meeting encouraged some priests to begin criticizing the revolution from the pulpit. This stimulated the growth of counterrevolutionary attitudes among the laity and an upsurge in attendance at Mass by individuals not normally involved in the church.

The emergence of the Catholic Church as the institutional base for the opposition was symbolized by the one million plus turnout at the National Catholic Congress in November 1959. Previously this meeting attracted approximately ten thousand people. The outpouring was encouraged by the collapse of the traditional political parties and a desire to find an alternative mode of political expression. The importance of the meeting was signified by Castro's appearance at the opening ceremonies. While most of the speakers were studiously apolitical, the President of Catholic Action, Mateo Jover, warned against exaggerated nationalism and an *Grupación Católica* leader, José Ignacio Lasaga, ended his presentation with the plea: 'Social justice yes; redemption of the workers and the farmer yes; communism no!' The crowd responded 'Cuba sí, comunismo no!' The final document of the Congress expressed strong opposition to the introduction into Cuba of any totalitarian ideology.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 496–7.

<sup>22</sup> Houtart and Rousseau, *op. cit.*, p. 119; Padula, *op. cit.*, pp. 143, 449–54; Claude Julien, 'Church and State in Cuba: Development of a Conflict', *Cross Currents*, Vol. XI, No. 2 (Spring, 1961), p. 187.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188; Padula, *op. cit.*, pp. 458–9.

About this time, two Cuban priests in Miami began alleging that Castro planned to create a national church, a charge denied by Bishop Evelio Díaz.<sup>24</sup> Anti-Castro activity in the US, however, intensified and in December 1959 Manuel Artimé of *Agrupación Católica* left for Miami after having been put in contact with the CIA by a Jesuit priest.<sup>25</sup> There was also a barrage of pastoral letters during this period. In one, Castro's former defender Bishop Pérez Serantes declared 'We cannot say that Communism is at our doors, for in reality it is within our walls, speaking out as if it were at home.'<sup>26</sup> Such statements helped precipitate demonstrations in front of churches with the cry being 'Cuba sí, Yanqui no.'<sup>27</sup> By the fall of 1960, the episcopacy had indicated in a number of public statements that in any clash between Cuba and the US, it would support the latter.<sup>28</sup>

A common theme of these and other church statements was whether or not the revolution was Christian and whether the fact that the majority of Cubans were Catholics dictated a different path. The conclusion was that the revolution was Marxist and, hence, not compatible with the Cuban reality which was Catholic. While social advances initiated by the government, including agrarian reform, were approved, it was argued that these had to be carried out with respect for the rights of private property. How this was to be accomplished was not explained. Elections and a multi-party system were recommended and class struggle inveighed against. The revolution was criticized for lacking a spiritual conception of life, a recognition of the dignity of the person, and for attempting to impose a uniform way of thinking and acting.<sup>29</sup>

Increasingly there was a sense among the Catholic faithful that it was their moral responsibility to be counterrevolutionary. Those Catholics who continued to support the government were sometimes accused of being Communists. The ideological struggle became more marked and there was growing fear expressed of children being 'lost' to Marxist indoctrination.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Julien, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

<sup>25</sup> Padula, *op. cit.*, p. 466.

<sup>26</sup> As quoted in Julien, *op. cit.*, p. 188. For full text, see Enrique Pérez Serantes, *Por Dios y Por Cuba*, May 16, 1960 (Santiago) in Ismael Teste, *Historia Eclesiástica de Cuba*, Vol. V (Barcelona, Artes Gráficas Medinaceli S.A., 1975), pp. 562-8.

<sup>27</sup> Julien, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

<sup>28</sup> Conferencia Episcopal de Cuba, 'Carta Abierta del Episcopado al Primer Ministro' (December 4, 1960), Teste, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 603-6; Enrique Pérez Serantes, 'Ni Traidores, Ni Parias', (September 24, 1960), Teste, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 569-72; 'Roma o Moscú', (November, 1960), Teste, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 572-7; 'Con Cristo o Contra Cristo', (December 24, 1960), Teste, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 585-90.

<sup>29</sup> Dewart, *op. cit.*, pp. 298-309.

<sup>30</sup> Interview, IH 4731192.

The April 17, 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion led by Manuel Artimé, and incorporating a number of other *Agrupados*, together with three Spanish priests, resulted in the closing of the headquarters of *Agrupación Católica*. It also precipitated the nationalization of all private schools, religious and secular, which prompted a mass exodus of priests and religious. Teachers in Protestant schools also left in great numbers.<sup>31</sup> Many believed that the government was embarking on a campaign of religious persecution and saw their opposition to the government as having spiritual rather than political motivation. One of the Catholic priests participating in the Bay of Pigs described his act as a spiritual mission, rather than the taking part in a political conspiracy.<sup>32</sup> Such attitudes and activities identified Catholics with the counterrevolution.

In 1970 the rector of the Catholic Seminary of San Carlos admitted that 'many priests actively supported the counterrevolutionary movements that arose, especially after the summer of 1960, and that culminated in the Bay of Pigs invasion in April, 1961. I don't know how much, but I am certain that counterrevolutionary meetings were held on church property, and that some priests urged Catholics to take part in counterrevolutionary activities and to go into exile.'<sup>33</sup> A 1979 analysis of this period by Cuban Catholics contained in a report to the 1979 Puebla Conference of Latin American bishops concluded that:

At times the Church hierarchy supported these counterrevolutionary tactics, and at other times it was indifferent to them. These tactics oftentimes incorporated the use of religious symbols in an effort to penetrate the popular conscience. The right wing also used many clergy, primarily foreign, and lay leaders. Hence many Christians of the bourgeoisie fled the country. Many poor and humble believers, who had been oppressed and were now receiving benefits from the Revolution, left the Church given its apparent opposition to the Revolution. This flight of the rich and defection of the poor left the membership of our Christian communities greatly reduced.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Dewart, *op. cit.*, p. 165; Houtart, *op. cit.*, p. 122; Padula, *op. cit.*, pp. 491-2.

<sup>32</sup> Jorge I. Dominguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 469-70. Dominguez speculates that the priest was also trying to excuse himself of culpability since the statement was made before the captured Bay of Pigs invaders were returned to the US.

<sup>33</sup> Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, as quoted in Antonio Benítez Rojo, 'Fresh Air Blows Through the Seminary', *LADOC 'Keyhole' Series*, No. 7 (Washington, D.C.; United States Catholic Conference, nd), p. 53.

<sup>34</sup> María Tereas Bolívar Arostegui, *et al.*, 'Cuban Christians and Puebla', *LADOC 'Keyhole' Series*, No. 17 (Washington, D.C., United States Catholic Conference, nd), pp. 42-3.

The exodus reduced substantially the income of the church, in addition to the loss of leaders.<sup>35</sup>

The year 1962 was a sorrowful one for Catholics. The churches were depopulated and stripped of their schools, the keystone of its recruitment strategy. Some Catholics were imprisoned for counterrevolutionary activities and the remainder were suspect by the government. Pro-government Catholics were unwelcome within the church. Although there was no official policy of persecution, there was discrimination and some local incidents. The government held sports programs on Sundays that competed with services, and entrance into the university, and securing some jobs were difficult for active churchpeople. By 1963, nevertheless, tensions were beginning to wane and some priests returned, joined by missionaries from France and Belgium.<sup>36</sup> The church meanwhile had turned in upon itself and become a refuge for those not integrated into the revolution. Its ability to influence its course was, as a consequence, nil.

The pre-revolutionary Cuban church was more comfortable with the status quo than radical change. It was also increasingly aware of the shallowness and narrowness of its hold on the Cuban population. The latter helps explain why it was unable to mobilize successful resistance to the revolution, although it did serve as an institutional base for counterrevolutionary sentiments. Most importantly, it failed to offer clear alternatives to the revolution's socioeconomic program. Church leaders also limited their influence by being slow to react to the revolution and initially ambiguous in their statements. This was, in part, a result of the fact that the episcopacy was the object of conflicting pressures from its middle class cadres. In addition, the Vatican urged the bishops not to exacerbate tensions with the government. The church, while united in its anti-Communism, was less united on the most effective strategies to pursue. Given the escape valve of emigration to the US, the church, eventually, was virtually without cadres to command. Whatever liberal impulses there had been in the 1950s were relegated to the sidelines due to the radical restructuring of Cuban society. The church by 1963 was left with virtually no role in Cuban society save to minister to those who were widely regarded as outcasts. The church's impulse for institutional survival, however, led it by the late 1960s to seek a rapprochement with the government. This effort at reinsertion into Cuban society was controversial.

<sup>35</sup> Padula, *op. cit.*, p. 480.

<sup>36</sup> Houtart and Rousseau, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-4; Jover, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

*C. Accommodation without renewal, 1963–9*

Rapprochement was encouraged by Rome, Vatican II and the Medellín conclusions. It was directly facilitated by the papal nuncio in Cuba from 1961–75, Cesare Zacchi. He ascribed the accommodation to the fact that:

The Church has realized that the revolution is irreversible. Up to a few years ago the priests thought it was provisional, that at any moment the situation could change, the atheistic regime of... state socialism would collapse, and it would be no more than a bad dream. But now socialism has become institutionalized, and the achievements of the revolution have proved lasting. In this stabilized situation the Church ought to begin to think of its place inside a new society. The government has detected this change of attitude, incipient though it may be, and for the first time has entered into talks with the Church through the nunciature – or at least found out certain points at firsthand. This is, after all, its country, and if the government believes the Church will work with it and not against it, then many things may improve.<sup>37</sup>

This position had resonance among younger Catholics who tended to accept the revolution as a given, even admitting its accomplishments while reserving the right to criticize. They also were more intent than the clergy on urging the implementation of the reforms of Vatican II, particularly as they related to lay participation. This brought them into conflict with both the majority of practicing Catholics, as well as the hierarchy.<sup>38</sup>

The 1960s witnessed increasing differences of opinion among the laity and between them and the hierarchy. In a 1972 statement on religious life in the parishes, a group of progressive Catholics criticized religious practices in Cuba for being dedicated to protecting Christians from 'the evil spirit of the outside world'. Too much effort was put into 'preserving the forms and values of a counter-society' considered ideal in contrast to revolutionary society. Under such circumstances, the priest was limited to consoling the disaffected.<sup>39</sup>

Such conditions did not give the church many strategic options. The majority of the laity and clergy continued in the late 1960s to be traditional Catholics gathered together, in part, by their desire not to be integrated into the revolution. A minority wanted a reformed church sufficiently integrated into revolutionary society to allow it to be considered a legitimate critic of the process. The hierarchy had a pragmatic agenda of

<sup>37</sup> 'A New Zealander Looks at Cuba' *LADOC*, Vol. I, 68a (May, 1971), p. 8.

<sup>38</sup> Jover, *op. cit.*, p. 18; Padula, *op. cit.*, p. 581.

<sup>39</sup> Cuban Christians for Socialism, 'How Christians in Cuba See Their Future', *LADOC 'Keyhole' Series*, No. 7, p. 77.

reinserting the church into Cuban society and identifying more with the post-conciliar church, particularly by being more receptive to change and opening itself up to other Christians and non-believers.

Rapprochement with the revolution was admittedly a substantial challenge:

because the Church must strive to be a sign of union and a place of encounter for all in this island that is ideologically divided (not everyone, by any means, supports the revolutionary regime), and for the government such an attitude will be judged counterrevolutionary – just as for many Catholics it would be proof of vacillation. It is a mighty challenge, further, because it arises at a moment when theoretical and tactical principles must all be reconsidered. Those who formulate the pastoral guidelines have so far been unable to devise practical norms for a Church in a revolutionary world. They have come up with only that awesome dilemma: total war or unconditional surrender.<sup>40</sup>

Given divisions within the church over accommodation with the government, the episcopacy opted for a pragmatic and tightly controlled process.

In 1969 two pastoral letters were issued. The first had as its stated objective translating the norms and objectives of Medellín into the Cuban context. Emphasizing the need for integral human development, they asserted that Christians had a responsibility in both their personal and community life to strive for improvement. This was to be achieved through work, sacrifice, cooperation and love. A prime impediment to Cuban development according to the bishops was the US embargo and, hence, they called for its lifting.<sup>41</sup> A second pastoral letter called for Catholics to respect and work with atheists for the common good.

Few Catholics were satisfied with the letters. Some felt that they should have been more supportive of the revolution and others that they should not have been issued at all or been more critical. The documents stimulated much debate about the proper course of the church and in October 1969 a meeting of 200 clerical and lay leaders was held in Havana with a Vatican representative to try to iron out some of the differences. A few problems relating to lay participation were resolved, others were not. As a consequence, there was an exodus from the church, particularly by young lay activists of varying positions.<sup>42</sup> This helped consolidate the direction of the church more firmly in the hands of the hierarchy and priests.

<sup>40</sup> Manuel Fernández, 'The Church, Eleven Years Later', *LADOC 'Keyhole' Series*, No. 7, p. 7.

<sup>41</sup> Episcopal Conference of Cuba, 'Pastoral Letter, April 10, 1969', *LADOC 'Keyhole' Series*, No. 7, pp. 47–9.

<sup>42</sup> Interview IM 5771112.

Contrary to much of what was going on in the rest of Latin America, political developments within the Cuban church emanated largely from the top down, rather than from the grassroots up. This limited the degree to which renewal and liberalization spearheaded by the laity was possible. Furthermore, if the bishops moved too fast and too far, they were liable to leave the bulk of the faithful behind further weakening the church. Hence, there was a tendency to avoid broadbased discussion of divisive issues.

Pro-revolutionary Catholics felt that dialogue within the church had to be undertaken to reduce the church's defense mechanisms and confront its problems. Chief among these was continued anti-Marxism in the church. They argued that Christians must necessarily be revolutionaries if the church was to take up a vital role within Cuban society.<sup>43</sup> This position found more supporters among the leadership of the Protestant churches in Cuba and, hence, became more identified with the Cuban Council of Evangelical Churches, the seminary in Matanzas, and the Presbyterian and the Methodist churches. By following this tack, Protestant leaders, however, tended to distance themselves from most of the faithful.

Progressivism within the Catholic Church was left largely to a small number of laypersons, some of whom attended the 1972 meeting of Christians for Socialism in Chile and who organized a few ecumenical encounters and Marxist-Christian study groups.<sup>44</sup> Their focus was more on contributing to the revolution rather than to the church. The impulse to integrate into the revolution was supported by the papal nuncio Cesare Zacchi, who felt that participation in revolutionary organizations would result in interchange and mutual influence. In this fashion certain Catholic views of life could be introduced into the revolution. Zacchi also saw no problem in Catholics employing Marxist economic analysis.<sup>45</sup>

Progressive Catholics realized that this would require extensive internal reform of the church and demonstrations of loyalty to the government. Integration into the revolution they felt required a redefinition of one's faith from a witnessing one to one of service. This led to an increasing sense of joint responsibility for the revolutionary process and a certain critical distance in evaluating the church.<sup>46</sup> It also opened the way for

<sup>43</sup> Cuban Christians for Socialism, *op. cit.*, pp. 79–80.

<sup>44</sup> Jim Wallace, 'Christians in Cuba', *Cuba Resource Center Newsletter*, Vol. III, No. 1 (April, 1973), pp. 4–5.

<sup>45</sup> Enrique López Oliva, *Los católicos y la revolución latinoamericana* (Havana, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1970), pp. 63–4.

<sup>46</sup> Cuban Christians for Socialism, *op. cit.*, pp. 77–8.

grassroots Christian-Marxist dialogue. However, there was no broad-based support for such a strategy and, hence, dialogue was limited. The church continued to be marginal and lacking in influence and vitality. One US commentator felt that the bishops did not encourage church activism, because they preferred to be in complete control of something removed from the total society than to be constantly bringing up the rear of a swiftly moving and changing process.<sup>47</sup> Whether it was because of this or fear of alienating the relatively conservative laity, the Catholic Church in Cuba reflected little of the ferment that was occurring in other Latin American churches.

## II

### *The Role of Religion within an Institutionalized Revolution*

The limited strategic goals of the Catholic Church allowed for a positive response to a series of initiatives on the part of the government in the 1970s. As the revolution became more institutionalized, the desire to clarify its relationship with all sectors of Cuban society became more pronounced. There was also a sense within the revolutionary leadership that there were advantages to be gained by recognizing the increasing progressivism of the Catholic Church worldwide and the possibility of Christian revolutionaries. Such a strategy was consonant with government goals aimed at reducing alienation and disaffection domestically and creating a broader base of support for Cuban internationalism. Cultivating progressive Christians within and without Cuba could help increase Cuban influence abroad. In Latin America, Cuba took increasing notice of revolutionary Christians and movements, such as the priest turned guerrilla, Camilo Torres of Colombia, and Christians for Socialism in Chile. In 1971 the National Educational and Cultural Congress evaluated the Catholic Church positively:

in light of the worldwide movement for its reform, the ecclesiastical hierarchy's attitude toward the revolutionary process and the role played today in our continent by the revolutionary movement in certain Catholic sectors, whose criterion is our Revolution. The trend of certain Catholic groups to separate socio-economic from philosophic problems – which makes possible and even stimulates individual contributions in activities connected with the Revolution's economic construction – together with our policy of welcoming everybody's participation in revolutionary work, opens the door to them.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>48</sup> Declaration on Religion of the First National Congress on Education and Culture, April 30, 1971 (Havana), Center for Cuban Studies Files, D-888, np.

The Congress proclaimed that the revolution's policy on religion in Cuba was complete separation of church and state as well as church and education. No encouragement, support or help would be given to any religion, nor favors requested of churches. The revolution regarded freedom of belief as an individual right and would not persecute an individual for his or her beliefs. Anyone, including believers, could be incorporated into the revolution. However, those sects that were deemed counterrevolutionary or obscurantist would be fought.<sup>49</sup> The best means to combat them it was asserted were scientific teaching and demonstration of the revolution's accomplishments.<sup>50</sup>

These policies were reflected in Article 54 of the 1975 Cuban Constitution which represented an important moment in the institutionalization of the revolution. This article held:

The socialist state, which bases its activity and educates the people in the scientific materialist concept of the universe, recognizes and guarantees freedom of conscience and the right of everyone to profess any religious belief and to practice, within the framework of respect for the law, the belief of his preference.

The law regulates the activities of religious institutions.

It is illegal and punishable by law to oppose one's faith or religious belief to the Revolution, education or the fulfillment of the duty to work, defend the homeland with arms, show reverence for its symbols and other duties established by the Constitution.<sup>51</sup>

The reaction of churchpeople was largely positive with a general sense that the constitutional article clarified the situation of the churches and churchpeople and opened the way for improved relations between church and State.<sup>52</sup>

The First Party Congress in 1975, the Platform of the Communist Party in 1978, and the Second Party Congress in 1980 all affirmed these principles. They also specifically denied that religious beliefs could be used to attack the revolution. Alliances with revolutionary Christians and their incorporation into the revolution were encouraged.<sup>53</sup>

Fidel Castro in a 1977 speech to the Jamaican Council of Churches went further and asserted that there should be a strategic alliance between religion and socialism. He claimed that this was possible because 'there

<sup>49</sup> Groups considered counterrevolutionary were the Jehovah's Witnesses, Evangelical Gideon's Band, and Seventh Day Adventists.

<sup>50</sup> Declaration, np.

<sup>51</sup> *Constitution of the Republic of Cuba* (Havana, Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1975), p. 30.

<sup>52</sup> Elmer Rodríguez, 'Cuba: Who Said There Is No Religious Freedom in Cuba?' *Prensa Latina Feature Service*, No. 168 (May 1, 1977), pp. 2-3.

<sup>53</sup> Partido Comunista de Cuba, Segundo Congreso, 'La construcción del socialismo y la libertad de conciencia', December, 1980, np.

are no contradictions between the aims of religion and the aims of socialism.<sup>54</sup> An increasing number of Catholics agreed, while continuing to reject the possibility that a Christian could be a Marxist. The stumbling block was and is the contradiction between belief in God and atheism.

The revolution's position on religion flows from Cuba's historical experience and Lenin's belief that religion is an individual matter. While there was sharp conflict in the early 1960s, the Catholic Church due, in large measure, to its institutional weaknesses, did not constitute a major threat to the revolution. In addition, the statements on religion of the party congresses and official documents stress that religion is a private matter and that the state should not involve itself in it. Hence, every citizen has the right to profess whatever religion he or she wishes. Lenin went further than the Castro government, for he would not deny party membership to believers. The exclusion of active churchpeople from the Communist Party limits their influence within the upper echelons of the two most important institutions in Cuba: the government and the army. The pervasiveness of a materialist explanation of life also circumscribes the role of religion. Nevertheless, the government is intent on encouraging the participation of Christians in the building and defense of a new society. Hence, cooperation at the practical level exists together with a continued ideological gulf.

### III

#### *Catholic Strategies and Resources*

Ideological distance means that most Cuban Christians continue to have a substantially different value orientation than their fellow citizens. In spite of increased cooperation at the grassroots level and courteous relations between the government and the hierarchy, the Catholic Church does not feel comfortable in socialist Cuba. Adaptation of the church to the existential situation has been substantial, acceptance of it less. One US analyst noted after visiting Cuba that the majority of Catholics are 'still fearful of any openness to socialism and mainly concerned with institutional survival...'<sup>55</sup> There is more receptivity to Marxist dialogue by churchpeople in other Latin American countries than in Cuba. This position stems, in part, from a view that for Marxists dialogue is a strategy used to

<sup>54</sup> Fidel Castro, 'There Are No Contradictions Between the Aims of Religion and the Aims of Socialism', *Granma*, Vol. XII, No. 7 (November 20, 1977), p. 5.

<sup>55</sup> John Hogan, 'Reflections on a Visit to Cuba', *Origins: National Catholic Documentary Service*, Vol. 9, No. 7 (July 5, 1979), p. 112.

consolidate power rather than to involve churchpeople in the exercise of power. Few Catholics define their role in Cuba in prophetic terms. Such a possibility is unlikely given the limited theological resources of the Cuban church. Liberation theology was relatively unknown in Cuba in the 1970s and today has more influence on the Protestant churches than the Catholic. Catholics have not yet fully analyzed the relationship of their Christianity to socialism and there does not appear to be a strong disposition to do so outside of a progressive minority. While some of the bishops have encouraged such impulses, the hierarchy as a whole provides primarily pastoral leadership.

Although Catholic leaders praise the accomplishments of the revolution, particularly the substantial gains in eliminating begging, crime, pornography, gambling, drugs and prostitution, together with improvements in the fulfillment of basic needs, a distinction is made between worthy goals and unacceptable ideology.<sup>56</sup> The question is, consequently, what is the role of the church in a society in which the government is committed to the elimination of want and has made considerable progress in doing so, but espouses an ideology churchpeople reject. The unspoken agenda of many Catholics in Cuba is to minister to the poor in spirit and to attempt to slake the thirst of those who are not satisfied by a materialist explanation of life. Interviews with Catholic seminarians in 1976 and 1979 indicated that these were prime motives for entering the priesthood. This results in an emphasis on Christian witness and a strong commitment to evangelization. The latter is conceived of in traditional terms by the majority. For the progressive minority, it involves participating in 'the common tasks and sacrifices of the people. This is the only way to promote justice, to participate in decision making, to receive benefits and to share the joys of our brothers and sisters. This is our dialogue.'<sup>57</sup>

In the face of continuing declines in church memberships<sup>58</sup> and activities, the Catholic hierarchy created in the late 1970s a commission on pastoral ministry that focused on evangelization. In its view:

It is to bring the Good News into all sectors and through its influence, transform from within and renew humanity. This means everyone must endeavor to become a New Person, eradicating egoism and living the newness of the Gospel. This

<sup>56</sup> Francisco Oves Fernández, Archbishop of Havana, 'Address to XI World Festival of Youth and Students, Havana, Cuba, July 28–August 5, 1978', *LADOC*, X, No. 2 (November/December 1979), p. 42.

<sup>57</sup> Bolívar, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>58</sup> While the 1985 *Anuario Pontificio* claims there are 3,973,000 Catholics in Cuba out of a population of 10,484,000, an official of the Cuban Conference of Bishops estimated that there were only about 150,000 that were active (IH 67328).

is evangelization. Eliminate the prejudices that exist in our ambient regarding God, faith, the church – this is evangelization.

Take advantage of every occasion to bravely affirm our faith and communicate our sentiments and convictions to others – this is evangelization.

Embrace the liberating message of the Gospel, lived and communicated with joy, giving meaning to life. It is not opposition to development and human promotion. On the contrary, it leads to plenitude. This is evangelization.

Catechize our brothers and sisters and prepare them to enter and participate more fully in the community through the sacraments – this is evangelization.

Educate your children in the faith and teach them to live and value it as a treasure – this is evangelization.

Proclaim the Gospel ‘with all your strength’ as a personal and communitarian testimony and with the explicit announcement of the Lord Jesus. This is evangelization.

Among ourselves it is necessary to avoid two erroneous attitudes: first, to conceive of evangelization only as attracting new members to the community and be content with this; secondly, attempt to evangelize only by life-witness, without making an explicit announcement of the reason for your faith and without trying to incorporate new members to the community.<sup>59</sup>

The recommended means of evangelizing include organizing study/reflection groups, simple conversing with others and giving Christian answers to questions about the meaning of life, including birth, love, suffering, death, sex and justice. Also suggested were communicating an appreciation of the simplicity of life, value of prayer and charity towards all.<sup>60</sup> The emphasis on evangelization appears to be stronger than the impulse to devise a theological anthropology appropriate to the situation. This is the result, in part, of the fact that the latter enterprise would tend to exacerbate divisions within the church.

In 1982 the Episcopal Conference announced a pastoral plan that emphasized popular religiosity. The dual emphasis on evangelization and popular religiosity has been encouraged by the papal nuncios who have succeeded Cesare Zacchi. The prime objective, according to a church official, is the deeper implantation of Catholicism.<sup>61</sup> There are those who strongly disagree with this strategy and continue to argue for integration into the revolution, as the only way to realize the Christian vision of society. However, as one Catholic layman lamented, the Cubans integrated into the revolution have undergone far greater transformation than those

<sup>59</sup> Episcopal Commission of Pastoral Ministry, ‘Toward Community Renewal: Evangelized and Evangelizing’, *LADOC*, VIII, No. 2 (November/December 1977), pp. 42–3.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>61</sup> Interview IH 4731191.

within the church making mutual understanding and cooperation difficult.<sup>62</sup>

One former leader of Catholic Action ascribed the limited development of Catholics to the failure of the hierarchy in the late 1960s and early 1970s to allow more lay participation in defining the direction of the church, particularly with respect to the revolution. This he argued would have resulted in a series of initiatives that would have eventually resulted in a more participatory role for churchpeople in Cuban society, rather than the simple accommodation of the institutional church. The former strategy would have resulted, he felt, in a more vital religious life, more vocations, and ultimately more unity within the church. This would have given the church more influence in secular society.<sup>63</sup> Such positions reflect the division of the laity into a relatively passive majority who continue to make a distinction between material and spiritual planes and a relatively uncritical progressive minority that supports the pragmatic policies of the hierarchy vis à vis the government. Finally, there are a few who see in greater lay participation within the church the means to forge a unified body that could reinsert itself into Cuban society and the body politic as a legitimate critic of the process. In part, because of these divisions, the church has yet to define its place within Cuba's socialist society except to the degree necessary to survive institutionally. One seminarian linked the problem to the church's continued desire to occupy a privileged position and hence, he felt, it was waiting to be incorporated into the revolution 'as a Monsignor, not as an ordinary person.'<sup>64</sup> This suggests that the world view of the Catholic Church in Cuba has not changed radically and continues to reflect pre-revolutionary attitudes. In view of this what is the future of the Catholic Church in Cuba?

#### IV

##### *Future of the Catholic Church in Cuba*

Clearly the Catholic Church in Cuba is institutionally the weakest in all of Latin America. It may also be theologically the least innovative. It is strongly challenged by the 'social gospel' of a Marxist/Leninist revolution that allows for more of a role for individual Christians than for churches.

<sup>62</sup> Interview IH 4731192.

<sup>63</sup> Interview IM 5771112.

<sup>64</sup> Hogan, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

Revolutionary Christians identify more, in many senses, with their secular counterparts than with other churchpeople. The progressives are, hence, not necessarily a strong stimulus for change within the church.

A preoccupation of the hierarchy is attracting Cuban youths to the church and to the religious life. Stripped of their prime recruiting grounds, private high schools, the church has turned to the parishes and Catholic student groups for vocations. Catholic university students meet several times a month for lectures and discussions and there are publications aimed at parish youth groups.<sup>65</sup> Most seminarians do not come from strongly religious families.<sup>66</sup> During the 1970s, approximately 10 to 12 seminarians entered each year, a rate somewhat higher than in the pre-revolutionary period.<sup>67</sup>

While the course of study at the Catholic seminaries in Havana and Santiago has been revised to reflect changes emanating from Vatican II, progressive theological developments are not emphasized. In 1979 most of the seminarians at San Carlos in Havana were relatively unfamiliar with liberation theology. One of the professors expressed a common feeling that 'liberation theology preoccupies those who are not yet liberated'.<sup>68</sup> Others regarded it as a means to promote socialist revolution that would be abandoned once the revolution was accomplished.<sup>69</sup> Financially the seminaries are funded by the dioceses with some items, such as foreign travel and study, as well as books from abroad funded by the international church.

Parish life varies according to the vitality of the clerical and lay leadership. Many formerly middle class parishes in urban areas are poorly attended and focus on traditional activities. Others with more of a tradition of innovation are well attended and involving. The working class parish of Jesús del Monte in Havana is an example. It is the largest parish in Havana with approximately 2,500 attending weekly mass. Youth and adult groups are active.<sup>70</sup> Attitudes of priests and laity are generally progressive. In general, however, attendance at services is the province of older people with the traditional Latin skew towards women.

To minister to Cuban Catholics, there were 116 diocesan priests, 82 regular priests and 240 nuns in 1982. Many, as in the pre-revolutionary

<sup>65</sup> Interview ISM 472115.

<sup>66</sup> Interview IH 37111.

<sup>67</sup> Interview IH 47111.

<sup>68</sup> Interview IH 371113RD.

<sup>69</sup> Interview IH 371113S.

<sup>70</sup> D. P. Noonan, 'Interview with Jaime Ortega Alamillo, Archbishop of Havana, July, 1982', mss., p.7.

period, were concentrated in Havana (85 priests and 185 nuns). Unlike that era most were Cubans, although there are some French, Spanish, Belgian and Canadian priests. As of 1985, there was one priest for every 52,949 Cubans – a clear indication of the limited presence of the church in Cuba today.<sup>71</sup>

The Catholic Church in Cuba does not have media access to make its presence felt. There is no 'Catholic press'. Those publications that do exist are primarily parish bulletins and materials for youth and study groups. Hence, there are no church experts on communications similar to those who have been so influential in the rest of Latin America. Given the demands of pastoral work and the government monopoly of the media, they are unlikely to develop.

Education is limited to religious instruction on church premises and there is no 'social apostolate as the government has taken over these activities'.<sup>72</sup> The church frankly does not have the personnel or financial resources for such activities. The current Archbishop of Havana, Jaime Ortega Alamillo has described the Catholic Church in Cuba as 'a poor one, short in human resources. It is a marginalized church. The Cuban experience is unique.'<sup>73</sup>

The ecumenical impulse is also weak. Although there have been exchanges, particularly among progressive churchpeople, there is still considerable resistance to it. The progressivism of the Protestant leadership make them suspect to some Catholics. The former Archbishop of Havana, Francisco Oves, initiated a number of ecumenical efforts, but these did not affect the bulk of Catholics.<sup>74</sup> Such contacts are, hence, limited primarily to the hierarchy and some progressive priests and laity. An example is the November, 1981 meeting of Protestants and Catholics that called on the United States to cease its aggression against Cuba, Central America and the Caribbean.<sup>75</sup> The preoccupation with the threat of war is acute as indicated by a November 26, 1981 pastoral letter. In that missive, the bishops asserted that they did 'not consider peace as the precarious balance between the heavily armed, or as the fruit of fear of catastrophe, or as the short pause between two conflicts.' Furthermore, they condemned any armed attack, blockade, psychological warfare, threats and pressure against Cuba. They urged consideration by all interested parties 'if their

<sup>71</sup> *Anuario Pontificio, 1985*

<sup>72</sup> Joseph F. Beckman, 'I Spent Holy Week in Havana', (1978), mss., p. 34.

<sup>73</sup> Noonan, *op. cit.*, np.

<sup>74</sup> Hogan, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

<sup>75</sup> J. Gary Campbell, 'La Sociedad cubana esta haciendo lo que siempre hemos pensado que la iglesia debe hacer: reportaje sobre dos semanas en Cuba', (1972), mss., p. 4.

intentions and attitudes contribute to peace in the region.' Negotiations, it was asserted, were the only valid and human solution for the crisis. It is in its desire for peace that the Catholic Church felt itself most closely identified with the Cuban people.<sup>76</sup>

The principal objectives of the Catholic Church in Cuba today are those enunciated by Vatican II: peace, social justice and human development. However, the Cuban church has few resources for promoting them, given its marginalization and institutional weaknesses. In addition, since active Catholics are excluded from important positions in the party and armed forces, they have little influence on the direction of the revolution. The impulse to integrate into the revolution for most churchpeople is limited to that degree necessary for adaptation to the existential situation. The progressive minority have not had a strong leavening effect on the church, in part as a result of failure to occupy positions of authority. The continued emphasis on episcopal and clerical control has enabled the church to survive, but not transcend its marginalized position.

Recent attention to evangelization and popular religiosity is part of an attempt to transform the church into a more spiritually vibrant institution. Such strategy does not confront the challenge of a Marxist/Leninist revolution. Avoidance of this is due largely to the conviction that Christianity and Marxism are profoundly antithetical. Failure to have articulated a vision of the role of the church in the context of a socialist Cuba has made Catholicism largely irrelevant. The Catholic Church in Cuba did not have the resources to do this in the 1960s, nor does it possess them in the 1980s. Hence, while there has been some admission of common goals in promoting community well-being and the importance of work for human development, there continues to be a lack of cooperation at very basic levels. This reflects the continued influence of substantially different value structures.

Although the values of the youth in the church incline them to be more receptive to socialism, they are strongly opposed to materialistic atheism. Hence, while they may help preserve the modus vivendi between the church and the revolution, they will not necessarily lead the church into a more radical position. The Catholic Church in Cuba remains more pre-Vatican II than post.

<sup>76</sup> Episcopal Conference of Cuba, 'Cuban Bishops' Peace Plea', *LADOC*, Vol. XII, No. 5:40 (May/June, 1982), pp. 42-4.